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TABLE OF CONTENTS

POLITICAL:

External – 1. Berlin/Germany.
2. Festivities for Astronauts.
3. US High-Altitude.
4. Possible Visit by Souvanna Phouma.

Internal 5. Leadership.
6. Propaganda Buildup for Rostov Oblast; Curfew in Novocherkassk.
7. Individual Reactions to Space Flight.

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Negative.

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Clearances:

JMMcSweeney

POLITICAL - EXTERNAL

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1. Berlin/Germany

KHRUSHCHEV's exploitation of the ceremony greeting Soviet astronauts NIKOLAYEV and POPOVICH to repeat Soviet objectives on Berlin moved the subject into the spotlight again. Khrushchev's remarks, while uncompromising and delivered in strong tones, nevertheless again stressed Soviet preference for a negotiated settlement of the Berlin question.. Khrushchev reiterated the Soviet contention that the Laos settlement provides an example for a resolution of the Berlin question, and added West Irian as another example.

In contrast to the usual Soviet practice, Khrushchev's Berlin comments were played in a relatively low key in follow-up accounts reporting international reactions to his speech.

The outbreak of violence in West Berlin following the killing of Peter FECHTER was presented in the Soviet press as a provocation which heightened the necessity to conclude a peace treaty and normalize the situation in West Berlin. The West Berlin police were criticized for alleged inactivity during the incidents involving Soviet buses. No reference was made to any role of US troops in protection of the buses.

The Soviet announcement of the abolition of the Soviet Sector Commandant's office was accompanied in most Soviet papers by a TASS report of the companion GDR statement emphasizing that the action was taken following consultation with GDR authorities. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

2. Festivities for Astronauts

Khrushchev and a number of other Party leaders flew into Moscow from the Crimea on August 18 to participate in the festivities that had been arranged in connection with the space flights of Soviet astronauts Nikolayev and Popovich. The ceremony at Red Square was marked by Khrushchev's restatement of a hard-line position on Berlin.

Basking in the glory of the occasion atop the Lenin Mausoleum with Khrushchev were Rumanian Communist leaders GHEORGHIU-DEJ, Gheorghe MAURER, and Chivu STOICA, French Communist Jacques DUCLOS, Canadian Communist Party leader Tim BUCK, and Johann KOPLENIG, Chairman of the Communist Party of Austria. Also present were North Vietnamese Politburo members Truong CHINH and Vo Nguyen GIAP.

Soviet propaganda media continued to capitalize on the space feat, contending that the achievement resulted from the superiority of the socialist system. The propaganda campaign was given further impetus by a large press conference on August 21 at which the astronauts were supported by M. KELDYSH, President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Professor V. YAZDOVSKY, and rocket specialist BLAGONRAVOV. During the course of the press conference, it was noted (1) that the capsules Vostok-III and Vostok-IV weighed approximately five tons, (2) that the astronauts had orbited within five kilometers of one another, (3) that they had

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☆GPO: 1961 O-612214(52)

landed by parachute next to the capsules, and (4) that they had landed about 200 kilometers from each other. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

3. US High-Altitude

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Soviet commentators quickly seized on the reported comments of US scientist VAN ALLEN to support the Soviet claim that the July 9 US high-altitude nuclear explosion had created a new radiation belt which posed hazards to manned space flights. In the Soviet view, this confirmed their contention that the US was primarily interested in spreading the arms race to outer space, while the USSR was devoting its efforts solely to peaceful purposes. An Izvestiya commentator, for example, lumped the US high-altitude test with his condemnation of various US satellites. He characterized Samos as a spy-satellite and the cosmic successor to the U-2, the Saint as an interceptor-satellite with aggressive purposes, and Telstar as a saboteur-satellite and a cold war tool. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

4. Possible Visit by Souvanna Phouma

In an exchange of letters published in Pravda on August 18, Souvanna PHOUMA expressed profuse thanks to Khrushchev for the moral and material aid extended by the Soviet Government and people to Laos during a trying historical period. Souvanna also indicated that he intends to visit the USSR in the nearest future, circumstances permitting. (UNCLASSIFIED)

POLITICAL - INTERNAL

5. Leadership

Nearly all of the Soviet Union's "ruling few" were on hand for the festivities at Red Square to welcome Nikolayev and Popovich. Only the aged KUUSINEN and SHVERNIK were missing from ranks of full Presidium members, together with the younger candidate-members GRISHIN and MAZUROV.

Khrushchev's place in the proceedings was best epitomized in a TASS report of the Kremlin reception following the Red Square welcome: "N. S. Khrushchev paternally embraced the 'heavenly brothers'." There was, indeed, a peasant fatherliness in the First Secretary's attitude towards the proceedings. On the heels of Popovich's revelation that he is the secretary of the primary Party organization in the unit commanded by Yuri GAGARIN, Khrushchev half-jokingly, half-condescendingly began his speech with the complaint that it was difficult for him, the First Secretary of the Central Committee, to have to follow the secretary of the astronauts' cell.

On August 22, Khrushchev, back in Yalta, received the group of Japanese businessmen (see Economic WEEKA No. 34).

In the light of the rumors evoked by KOZLOV's lengthy vacation and his involvement in the difficulties through which Rostov Oblast has been going (see below), it was of some interest that the "Second Secretary" acted as chairman of the Red Square meeting, a "traditional" role which he had filled at the August 9, 1961, meeting honoring Major G. S. TITOV. A day earlier, on August 17, Kozlov had

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☆GPO: 1961 O - 612212 (52)

received two members of the Politburo of the Vietnamese Toilers Party. On August 20, he and BREZHNEV saw the Rumanian leaders Gheorghiu-Dej, Maurer, and Stoika off for home at Sheremetyevo Airport. On August 21, VORONOV, KIRILENKO, Kozlov, MIKOYAN, and SHELEPIN participated in the opening of the VI Congress of Consumer-Cooperative Plenipotentiaries in the Kremlin, and, on August 23, Kirilenko and Kozlov attended the Rumanian Embassy's national-day reception. Any question about Kozlov's current standing in the leadership appeared to have been answered by his public prominence during the week.

While Kozlov assumed part of the protocol burden in Moscow, Mikoyan continued to handle the strictly diplomatic side, receiving the Cambodian Ambassador, Khu KANTULA, on August 16, attending the Indonesian national-day reception on August 17, and receiving the new Iraqi Ambassador, Abdul Muttalib EL-AMIN, on August 23. Members of the visiting American publishers' exchange delegation were told by Soviet officials that Mikoyan would shortly be leaving Moscow to take his vacation.

There were no visible domestic-political repercussions from the announcement, published in Pravda on August 21, that RAKOSI and GEROE had been expelled from the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party and that Karoly KISS had been removed from its Politburo. (UNCLASSIFIED)

6. Propaganda Buildup for Rostov Oblast; Curfew in Novocherkassk

Three days after the appointment of ideological specialist V. V. SKRYABIN (WEFKA No. 33) as the new Rostov Oblast Party Secretary, the Rostov newspaper, Molot (August 18), printed a decree of the CPSU-CC and Council of Ministers congratulating Oblast harvesters for exceeding the grain plan by 30 million poods. The work was said to have been so well organized that during the most intensive period of the harvest it was possible to free 2,500 tractors for other work. The good news was briefly repeated, for broader consumption, in Pravda on August 20, and on August 23 Pravda again had a brief Rostov item, this time stating that the Oblast Committee had sent 600 lecturers into the fields.

Meanwhile, Embassy officers touring the Donbass by automobile had been denied permission by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to drive through Shakhty, the only town in the proposed itinerary that was in Rostov Oblast. After spending the night of August 18 in the city of Lugansk, north of Rostov, they were asked by the local authorities to leave, on the pretext that they had exceeded the terms of a daytime-only authorization. They were also told not to use a previously approved route that, in the words of the Oblast Executive Committee chairman, who had summoned them to his office, was "right next to the border of Rostov Oblast."

The Novocherkassk newspaper, Znamya kommuny, on July 27, announced a fifteen-day-old City Executive Committee decision establishing summer and winter curfews of 9:00 and 8:00 p.m., respectively, for youths up to the age of 16, to remain in force for two years. This extraordinary measure appeared to follow logically a June 15 Komsomol aktiv meeting, reported by the same (June 19) newspaper, at which city Komsomol secretaries were severely criticized for the "hooliganism" that had occurred in some of 42 dormitories housing 16,000 youths in the city. The secretaries were charged with having failed to "make a principled evaluation of the situation that had developed."

☆GPO : 1961 O - 612212 (52)

It would appear that the Soviet propaganda apparatus is putting a good face on the Rostov situation, now that a new Oblast First Secretary has been installed. Foreign visitors are still, however, emphatically not welcomed. And, in the area itself, the Novocherkassk curfew is ample proof of the regime's continuing concern with the local morale and temper. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

7. Individual Reactions to Space Flight

Embassy officers in conversations with Soviet officials and citizens continue to encounter indifference on the subject of the Soviet "space twins." This has been the case, not only in Moscow, but also during an automobile trip by Embassy officers to the Donbass. When the feat was mentioned at all, comment was more often than not initiated by the Americans. The typical reaction was a ritualistic, brief exchange of congratulations and a few words of enthusiasm on the Soviet side.

To the man in the street, the Embassy Ford was more impressive than sputniks. In Orel, when one of a curious throng of about 200 surrounding the car, said rapturously, "That's better than ours," one of the officers replied, "But you have cosmonauts." This produced cheers, but then someone said, in a loud voice, "But what can you do with cosmonauts?"

In a visit to a worker's apartment in another town, one of the officers congratulated the host on the launching of the two manned satellites, still in orbit at the time. The man made a spitting gesture and said sardonically, "What good is that to me? I want to raise a family and not a bunch of paupers."

The only person to linger on the subject of cosmonauts was a middle-aged Communist engineer who insisted that the Soviet space lead is evidence of American decadence and Soviet superiority. Most of the other Soviet citizens with whom the officers talked wanted to utilize a unique individual contact with foreigners in order to find out as much as possible about conditions in the outside world. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

Boris H. Klosson

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